

仲宏
和月



Rurouni Kenshin™

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

13



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



LOOKING BACK ON '96

(1) THREE CASES WHERE I REALLY LOST IT: ONE WHERE I JUST COULDN'T ACCEPT; ONE WHERE I JUST COULDN'T GIVE IN; ONE WHERE I JUST COULD NOT FORGIVE. (2) THREE CASES OF SINCERE REGRET...AFTER REALLY LOSING IT. IF I HADN'T LET ANGER TAKE CONTROL, IF I'D BEEN ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THINGS CALMLY, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITHOUT HARMING RELATIONS OR TRUST. (3) ONE CASE OF ENLIGHTENMENT: WHETHER THEY'RE GOING POORLY OR WHETHER THEY'RE GOING WELL, THINGS ARE STILL ALL A RESULT OF ONE'S OWN ACTIONS.

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 13: A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

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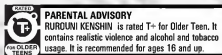
Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, March 2005



www.viz.com



SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™

A black and white illustration of the character Kenshin Himura. He is shown from the chest up, wearing his signature dark, high-collared garment. He has long, straight hair with bangs. He is holding a sword, with the hilt visible near his head and the blade extending downwards. The background is plain white.

**MELJI
SWORDSMAN
ROMANTIC
STORY**

**Vol.13
A
BEAUTIFUL
NIGHT**



**STORY & ART BY
NOBUHIRO
WATSUKI**

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *rumōni*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

THUS FAR

Kenshin has journeyed to Kyoto to block the machinations of Shishio Makoto, the man who took Kenshin's place as *hitokiri*. After him come Kaoru, Yahiko, Sanosuke... and a man who is out to kill Kenshin, Shinomori Aoshi. Along the way, Kenshin falls in with a girl named Misao and her mentor, Okina, former member of the Outwabanshū and now-owner of an inn called Aoi-Ya. In a battle with Sōjirō—a member of Shishio's *Juppongatana* or "Ten Swords" corps of assassins—Kenshin's *sakabatō* is shattered, and so he acquires a new one, Shinnichi, from the son of the great swordsmith, Arai Hakukū. Next, Kenshin seeks out Hiten Mitsunrgi-ryū master Hiko Seijirō to obtain the ultimate secret of that school of swordmanship... which Kenshin failed to learn when he deserted his studies 15 years ago. Meanwhile, Aoshi attempts to sell information on Kenshin to Okina and, when the latter refuses, Aoshi says he'll take his knowledge to Shishio. Okina fights to stop him, but Aoshi has rid himself of compassion and has become a veritable demon... and Okina falls. Misao declares herself *Okashira* or "head" of the Outwabanshū, swearing to defeat Shishio no matter the cost.

Kenshin, armed with the secret called *Amakakerni Ryū no Hirameki*, meets with Sanosuke and Saibō and learns of Shishio's plans to set fire to Kyoto. Kenshin realizes that the plans must have been leaked on purpose, as a diversion from Shishio's real plot to sail *Hengoku*, Shishio's ironclad warship, to Tokyo and to attack the capital from the seas. The three intercept Shishio at the port of Osaka, where Sanosuke sinks the warship with his explosives. The Outwabanshū have saved the city of Kyoto from incineration, and the stage of battle moves on to Shishio's lair....



C
A
S
T

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RUROUNI KENSHIN

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MORE
THAN 50
SMALL FIRES,
BUT ALL
QUICKLY PUT
OUT.

NO
HOUSES
DESTROYED.
SEVEN
DAMAGED.



FORTY-ONE
POLICEMEN
DEAD, AND
MANY
INJURED...

IT'S
ALMOST
A
MIRACLE...

...BUT
WE'VE YET
TO HEAR ONE
REPORT OF A
CITIZEN BEING
KILLED.

OUT OF 5,000. NOT
ONE IN A HUNDRED.
AND WE CAPTURED
NEARLY ALL OF
THEIRS. NOT A
BAD RATIO.



FORTY-
ONE
MEN...

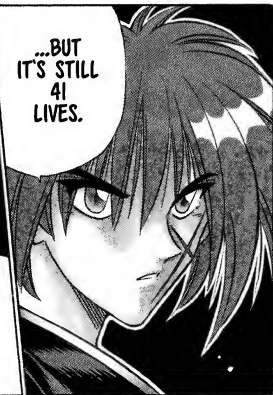


Act 103—After the Night



...HMPH.

...BUT
IT'S STILL
41
LIVES.



FP

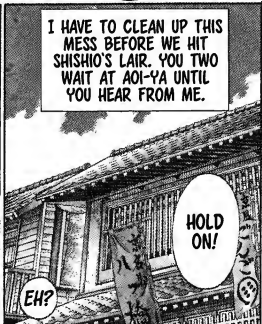
WELL, IF
THAT'S THE
WAY YOU WANT
TO LOOK AT
IT.



MAYBE YOU
TWO ARE
FIGHTING
TOGETHER FOR
NOW...

...BUT
GARBAGE IS
STILL GARBAGE,
EVEN IN
KYOTO!

I HAVE TO CLEAN UP THIS
MESS BEFORE WE HIT
SHISHIO'S LAIR. YOU TWO
WAIT AT AOI-YA UNTIL
YOU HEAR FROM ME.



HOLD
ON!

EH?

...OUGHTN'T
YOU AND
SAITO HAVE
MADE
FRIENDS
BY NOW?



YOU WERE
AT THE
POLICE
STATION
SO LONG,
SANO...



EVEN
IF YOU
DID
NEARLY
KILL
THIS
ONE...

FINE,
FINE.

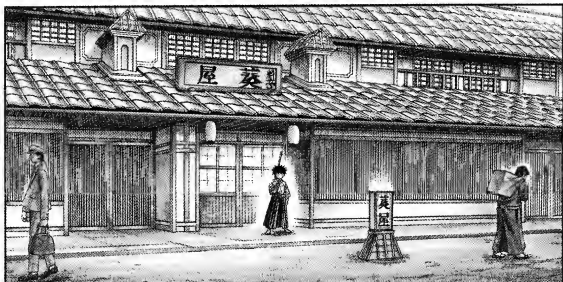


HURRY
AND GET
US TO
AOI-YA.

STOMP
STOMP



ANYWAY,
I'M
STARVING.



AN
ONIWABANSHŪ
IN KYOTO...
AND THEY'RE
ON OUR
SIDE!

A manga panel featuring three characters. On the left, Sanosuke Sengoku stands in a white gi with a dark scarf. On the right, Kenshin Himura stands in a dark cape over a white gi, holding his sword. In the background, a flashback shows a young Kenshin standing in front of a building with a sign that reads '突屋' (Totsu-ya). A speech bubble from the flashback says 'OH.' and another from the young Kenshin says '!'.

LIFE
TAKES SOME
STRANGE
TWISTS,
DOESN'T
IT?

HSSH

OH.

!

SANOSUKE!

KENSHIN!





...KAORU-
DONO.

SORRY
TO HAVE
WORRIED
YOU...



I MADE
A PROMISE,
DIDN'T I?

YOU ACTUALLY
GOT HER
TO COME.



...MM.



AND
HOW IS
MISAO-
DONO?



NOW
IT'S UP TO
PURITY OF
HEART.



AND
THE
SECRET
...?

IS
THIS
ONE'S...
MOSTLY.



...YOU
WON'T
LIKE
THIS...



MISAO-
DONO!

BLAST
HER!



...BUT OF
COURSE,
WITH HER
PERSONALITY,
SHE'D HAVE TO
TAKE IT ON
HERSELF!

THE LETTER
WAS OBVIOUSLY
WRITTEN TO
RAISE EVERY
ONIWABANSHU
IN KYOTO...

THAT
FOOL!









ANJI.
WHAT IS
THE
MEANING
OF THIS?

ANY
MORE
FIGHTING
IS
MEANING-
LESS.

ALL BUT
KAMATARI
AND
HENYA'S
UNITS ARE
FLEEING.

I ASK
WHY YOU
INTERRUPT
MY
PLEASURES.

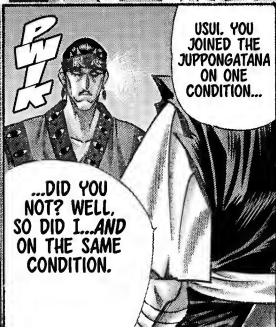
DEPENDING
ON THE
ANSWER, I
MAY KILL
EVEN YOU.

I DO
NOT
WISH...

...TO
TAKE
ANY
LIFE
WITHOUT
REASON.

THE
RIGHT TO DO
WHATEVER
YOU WISH
WITH THE
ENEMY'S LIFE...
NO MATTER
WHAT YOUR
ORDERS.

"LIFE
TAKEN,
LIFE
GIVEN."



USUL. YOU
JOINED THE
JUPPONGATANA
ON ONE
CONDITION...

...DID YOU
NOT? WELL,
SO DID I...AND
ON THE SAME
CONDITION.



THEY
STARED AT
EACH OTHER
WITHOUT
MOVING FOR
HALF AN
HOUR.

AND
SUDDENLY
THEY LEFT
WITHOUT
SAYING A
WORD.



HE'S
THIRD-BEST
OF THE TEN,
THEY SAY.

USUI DIDN'T WANT
TO FIGHT HIM
BECAUSE HE KNEW
HE WOULDN'T
GET AWAY
UNWOUNDED.

THIS ANJI SEEMS
A LITTLE
DIFFERENT FROM
THE REST OF
SHISHIO'S MEN.



YOU
HAVEN'T
HEARD A
WORD, HAVE
YOU.



WELL...AS
LONG AS
YOU'RE SAFE,
MISAO-DONO.



IT'S
TIME.

TIME
TO
TEST
YOU
WITH
THIS
FIST.

GRIP

SANO?

...AND
NOT
JUST
FOR
YOU,
KENSIN.

...
"STRANGE
TWISTS"
...

KENSIN!
HEY!!

KENSIN.

...

MEANING
YOU
TOTALLY
FORGOT.

RIGHT?

I DIDN'T
TELL YOU
BEFORE 'CAUSE
I WAS AFRAID
IT WOULD
DISTURB YOUR
TRAINING.

I WASN'T
DONE YET.
THERE'S
ANOTHER
DANGEROUS
GUY.

OH...
SORRY.
WHAT
IS IT?



SHINOMORI AOSHI
HAS GIVEN HIS
VOW AS FORMER
OKASHIRA TO KILL
YOU...SO HE'S
SIDED WITH
SHISHIO MAKOTO...

**AOSHI?!
IN
KYOTO
?!**

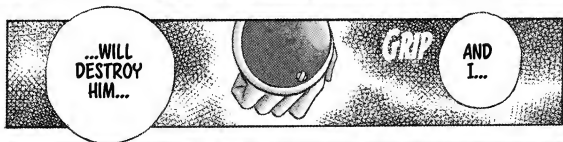
...AND
LEFT
OKINA
HALF-
DEAD.

**MORE
THAN
THAT!**



**NOW HE
IS MY
ENEMY.**

**HE
WAS MY
MENTOR.**



**...WILL
DESTROY
HIM...**

GRIP

**AND
I...**



...DONO...

MISAO...

Rurouni Kenshin





Act 104—Tears





Act 104

Tears





I
HOPE
YOU'LL
FORGIVE
ME.

I'M
AFRAID I'VE
WORRIED
YOU ALL.

TUG



HIMURA-
KUN.

HEY!

YOU
LOOK
LIKE A
MUMMY!



YES?

OMASU.

I'M
SORRY, BUT
COULD YOU
LEND ME
YOUR
SHOULDER?



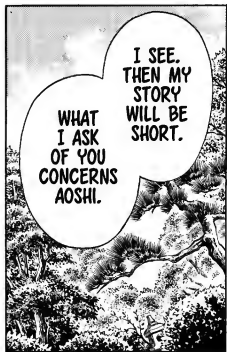
I'VE A
FAVOR
TO ASK
OF YOU.

.....



BUT
MISAO-
DONO'S TOLD
THIS ONE
A LITTLE.

NOT
MUCH.



WHAT
I ASK
OF YOU
CONCERNS
AOSHI.

I SEE.
THEN MY
STORY
WILL BE
SHORT.



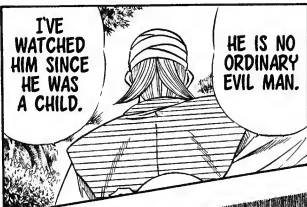
HIMURA-
KUN, HOW
MUCH DO YOU
KNOW...

...ABOUT
WHAT AOSHI
HAS BEEN
DOING?



**SHINOMORI
AOSHI...**

**...MUST
BE
KILLED.**



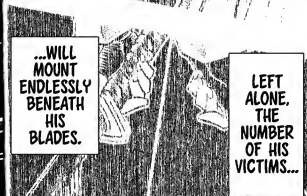
I'VE
WATCHED
HIM SINCE
HE WAS
A CHILD.

HE IS NO
ORDINARY
EVIL MAN.



HE IS
TOO MUCH
FOR ME
TO STOP.

HE HAS
THROWN
AWAY ALL
SENSE OF
GOOD AND
EVIL. HE IS
POSSESSED
BY
SAIKYŌ—
"ULTIMATE
POWER."

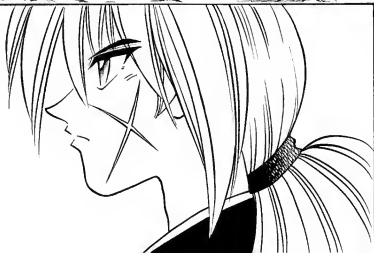


...WILL
MOUNT
ENDLESSLY
BENEATH
HIS
BLADES.

LEFT
ALONE,
THE
NUMBER
OF HIS
VICTIMS...



HIMURA-
KUN, I ASK
OF YOU...









I THOUGHT I'D ALREADY
DECIDED.

I THOUGHT I'D BE
LIKE ICE.



MY HEARTBEAT WON'T SLOW DOWN.



MY BODY WON'T MOVE.



WILL YOU TRULY...

...KILL AOSHI-SAMA,

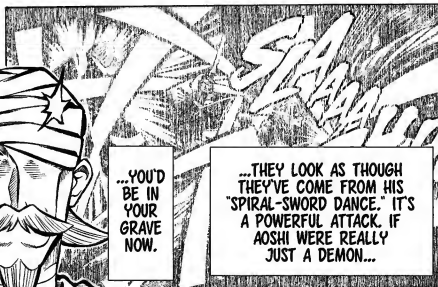
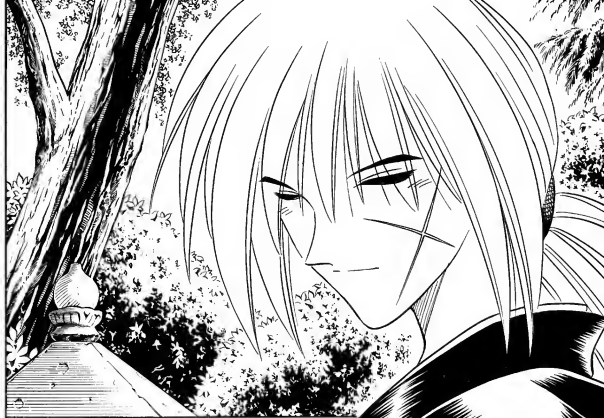
HIMURA?



HIMURA...

WILL YOU REALLY

KILL HIM?



...YOU'D
BE IN
YOUR
GRAVE
NOW.

...THEY LOOK AS THOUGH
THEY'VE COME FROM HIS
"SPIRAL-SWORD DANCE." IT'S
A POWERFUL ATTACK. IF
AOSHI WERE REALLY
JUST A DEMON...

OKINA-
DONO,
YOUR
WOUNDS...





MAYBE
HE DIDN'T
EVEN
REALIZE
IT. BUT IT
SHOWS...

HE MUST
HAVE HELD
HIMSELF
BACK AT
THE LAST
INSTANT.



AOSHI
IS NO
DEMON.



...HIS
SOUL IS
STILL
STRIVING
TO BE
HUMAN.

...THAT EVEN IF
HIS *CONSCIOUS*
MIND IS
FOLLOWING
IN THE WAY
OF THE
DEMONS...

NOT
JUST
YET!

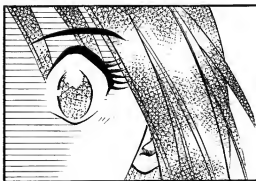


AOSHI'S
RESTING
PLACE
IS NOT
DEATH.

IT IS
HERE.

...THAT
HE WILL BE
BROUGHT
BACK.

AND
THIS ONE
PROMISES
YOU...



HIMURA—









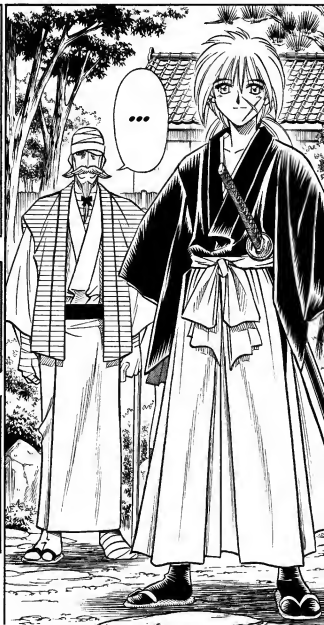
...AND HERE
WAS I, ABOUT
TO BREAK
HER HEART....



I ONLY
HOPE I'M
PROVED
WRONG.

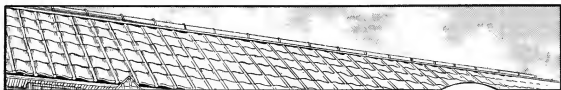


HIMURA-
KUN.



...OF
AOSHI.

JUST
TAKE
CARE...



A
MESSAGE
?

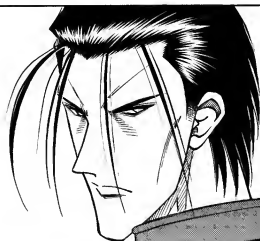
YUH-
HUH.

! CAPTAIN
FUJITA.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 105—A Beautiful Night



SAITŌ
SAYS HE
CAN'T
LEAVE FOR
ANOTHER
HALF-DAY...

...IN ORDER
TO ARRANGE
TEMPORARY
HOLDING CELLS
FOR THE 4,000
CAPTURED
CRIMINALS AS
WELL AS THE
PURSUIT OF
THOSE WHO
ESCAPED.

葵屋 料理

葵屋

伸宏
和月



A group of people, including several men in traditional Japanese attire and a few women, are gathered in a courtyard with a tiled roof building in the background. One man is walking away from the group.

...SO, THE
ASSAULT ON
SHISHIO WILL
BE EARLY
TOMORROW
MORNING.

AN'
TOO BAD,
TOO, 'CAUSE
I'M READY
NOW.

I CAN'T BELIEVE
THE BATTLE
ADVANCED SO
FAR WHILE I
WAS ILL.

BUT NINE OF
THE TEN
JUPPONGATANA
ARE STILL
OUT THERE.

MM...

YOU
HANG
AROUND
LIKE YOU
BELONG
HERE...

ONE
MORE
THING.

...BUT
WHO
ARE
YOU?!

JAB



UH-
HUH.



SCRATCH

SCRATCH

I'M A
FRIEND
OF
KENSIN'S.

FEH.
YEAH,
ALL
RIGHT.

I'M
SAGARA
SANOSUKE.



MY
QUESTION
EXACTLY.

SANO

WE'VE
BEEN SO
BUSY...

SORRY!

YOU
DIDN'T
TELL THEM
ABOUT
ME?

HEY!



MEN WITH
HAIR STICKING
UP ARE
USUALLY
TROUBLE.

LIKE CHŌ.

YOU
LOOK
SHADY.

YOUR
EYES ARE
SHIFTY.

WHY
SHOULD
WE?

YOU
DON'T
BELIEVE
ME?!

ARRH!

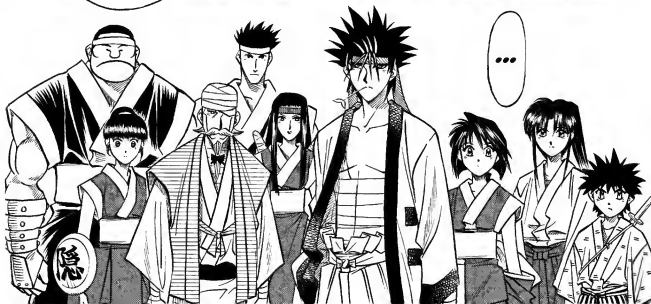


...IS
AMONG
THE MEN
THIS ONE
TRUSTS
MOST.

SANO...



AHEM...







KENSHIN...

...KAORU-DONO?



YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO REST.
WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT...?

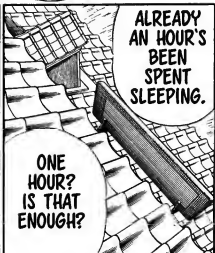


OH, I JUST HAD TO GO—

YOU'RE UP LATE TOO, KAORU-DONO.
WHAT'S GOING ON?



DON'T ASK!



ALREADY AN HOUR'S BEEN SPENT SLEEPING.

ONE HOUR? IS THAT ENOUGH?

NOW
IT'S UP
TO PURITY
OF
HEART.

AND
THE
SECRET
...?

WHAT
YOU SAID
THIS
AFTERNOON
...

YES?

IS THIS
ONE'S...
MOSTLY.

THE
"PURITY
OF YOUR
HEART."

AH.

...SAY,
KENSHIN
?

MM?

IT'S
NOT
FINE!

IT'S FINE
IF YOU
DON'T
UNDER-
STAND.

BUT
WHAT DOES
THAT
MEAN?

NOT
IF IT'S
ABOUT
YOUR
LIFE AND
DEATH!

I'VE
BEEN
THINKING
ABOUT
IT, BUT...



IT'S A
TRULY
DEADLY
MOVE.

STILL,
EVEN WITH
SAKABATŌ,
THE MASTER
WAS NEARLY
KILLED.

AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI IS
BATTŌJUTSU
OF ULTIMATE
SWIFTNESS...



...THIS
TIME,
IT'S
CERTAIN.
SOME-
ONE WILL
DIE.

IF ONE'S
SELF IS LOST,
AS WAS IN
THE BATTLES
BETWEEN
CHŌ AND
SAITŌ...

...A
TECHNIQUE
FOR STRIKING
WITH THE
SPEED OF A GOD.
ITS SECRET
HAS BEEN
LEARNED.

...RENDERS
THE LEARNING
OF THE
SECRET MOVE
ALL BUT
USELESS.

AND YET,
TO HOLD
BACK IN
FEAR OF
LOSING
THAT
SPEED...

...UNLEASHING
THIS GOD-LIKE
SPEED IN JUST
THE WAY THAT
WILL DEFEAT,
BUT NOT
KILL.

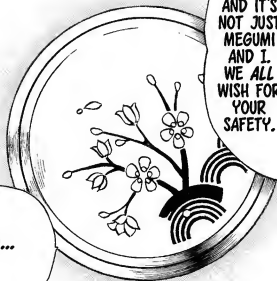
THIS ONE
MUST STAND
ON THE PAPER-
THIN WALL
BETWEEN LIFE
AND DEATH, IN
THE HEAT OF
BATTLE...







SO...



GET BACK
INSIDE OR
I'M TELLING
TSUBAME-
CHAN!

TSU-TSU-
TSUBAME'S
GOT
NOTHING TO
DO WITH
THIS!

WHAT
BUSINESS
IS THAT
OF
YOURS?!

WHAT'RE YOU
WAITING FOR?!
MEGUMI'S NOT
EVEN HERE!
K-K-KISS HIM,
STUPID!



OF
COURSE
HE'S
NOT!

THERE ARE
THINGS
YOU CAN
SEE TO
WHILE WE'RE
GONE.

IT'S
GOOD YOU
SHOWED
UP,
YAHIKO.

LIKE A RAY
OF SUN...

OH!

GONE...?!
YOU'RE NOT
GONNA
TAKE ME?!

IT'S
GOTTEN
WAY OUT
OF HAND.

IF YOU
BOTH GET
KILLED, WHO'LL
PAY MY TAB
AT AKABEKO?





WE'VE
PREPARED A
COUNTERMEASURE,
BUT IF THAT
HAPPENS, A
BATTLE IS
INEVITABLE.

TOMORROW,
WHEN WE'RE
FIGHTING THE
TEN SWORDS...

...SHISHIO'S
MEN MAY
SEE IT AS A
CHANCE TO
STRIKE AT
AOI-YA.

...TO KEEP
SOME OF
OUR BEST
AT AOI-YA.

AND
THAT'S
WHY WE
NEED...

...TO
DEFEND
OUR
FRIENDS!

YOU'RE
NEEDED
HERE...

!!

-GOT
IT!!

YOU'VE-



...AND THE
TRUSTED
FRIENDS
GATHERED
HERE.

WE
SHOULD'VE
JUST
HAD THE
PARTY.

HEH. SO
EVERYONE'S
AWAKE,
AFTER
ALL.



...THE
SWORD,
"SHIN-
UCHI."

Shake!

THE ARAI
FAMILY,
WHO GAVE
THIS
ONE...

...THE SECRET,
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI.

MASTER
HIKO,
WHO GAVE
THIS
ONE...

...IN A
FARAWAY
CITY...

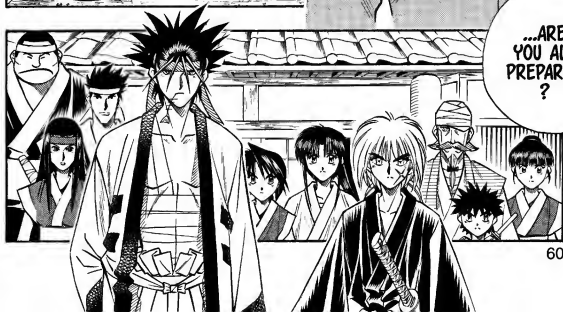
THE
TRUSTED
FRIENDS
...

THIS
ONE HAS
NOTHING
TO FEAR.

YOU GIVE
STRENGTH
TO THIS
ONE'S
HEART.



WE'RE
OFF.



...ARE
YOU ALL
PREPARED
?



I
WANT
US
ALL...



KENSHIN.



...TO GO
BACK TO
TOKYO
TOGETHER.



MM.



SHISHIO-SAMA, WE
HAVE A
REPORT
FROM OUR
INFORMANTS.

HIMURA,
SAITÔ, AND
SAGARA
HAVE LEFT
AOI-YA.

EXCELLENT.
HŌJI,
GATHER THE
JUPPONGATANA
HERE.

4
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98
99
100

UNLESS
WE WERE
TO PLAN THE
ORDER OF
COMBAT,
OR...

THERE
IS NO
PLAN
FOR A
DUEL.

IF I
MIGHT
FIRST
SUGGEST
A PLAN...



WHAT
ARE YOU
THINKING?

—HŌJI.

SHISHIO-
SAMA'S
ABSOLUTE
VICTORY.

THERE
IS ONLY
ONE THING
I THINK
ABOUT.

Rurouni Kenshin

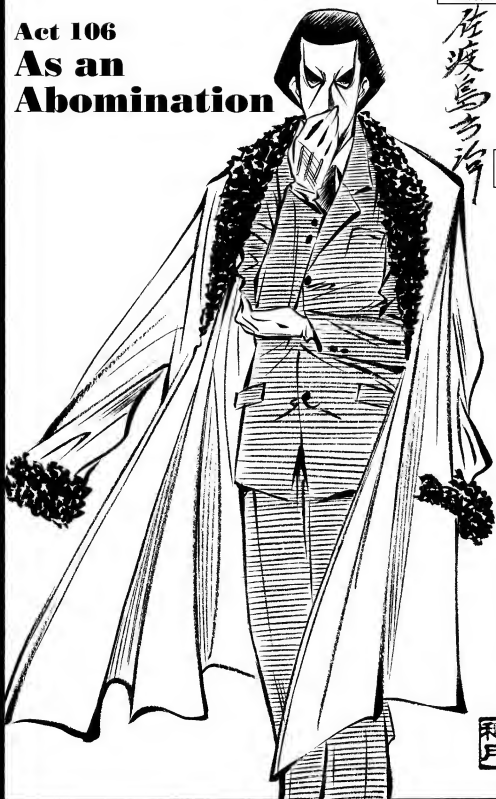


Act 106
As an
Abomination

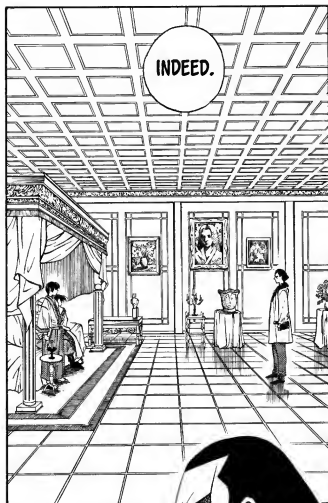
SADOJIMA
HÔJI

ろくにん 剣心
佐渡島 方治

RURONI
KENSIN



伸宏
和月



INDEED.



ABSOLUTE.



"ABSOLUTE
VICTORY"...

...YOU
SAY?



IN
NUMBERS
AND
STRENGTH,
WE
CLEARLY
HAVE THE
UPPER
HAND.

IN THIS
BATTLE WE
SEND TEN—
INCLUDING
MASTER
SHISHIO—
AGAINST
THREE.



SO
WHY ARE
YOU
UNHAPPY?

OBTVIOUSLY.



...HITTING
THEM WITH
THE THREE
STRONGEST
OF THE
JUPPON-
GATANA—
AND ANJI...

BUT IF
WE ALSO
BRING
ONLY AN
ELITE
CORPS...

IF WE CLASH
HEAD-ON, WE
LOSE OUR LESSER
WARRIORS, FROM
CHÔ ON DOWN.

BECAUSE
OUR
ENEMIES
ARE THE
ELITE OF
THE ELITE.

...TO
COMPLETE
THE
ANNIHILATION
OF WHOEVER
REMAINS AT
AOI-YA.

...WE WILL
HAVE SIX
WARRIORS
REMAINING
...

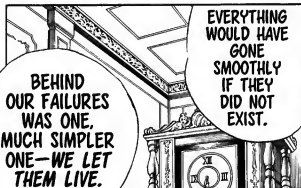




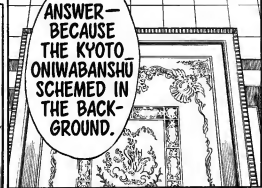
...THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING HIM WITH THEIR NETWORK OF SPIES.



QUESTION—
WHY DID
OUR GRAND
PLAN FOR THE
BURNING OF
KYOTO
FAIL?



EVERYTHING
WOULD HAVE
GONE
SMOOTHLY
IF THEY
DID NOT
EXIST.



ANSWER—
BECAUSE
THE KYOTO
ONIWABANSHU
SCHEMED IN
THE BACK-
GROUND.

IF HE'S
CHALLENGED TO
A DUEL, HE'LL
NEVER EXPECT THE
JUPPONGATANA
THEMSELVES TO
GO TO AOI-YA.

BUT HE
IS STILL A
SWORDSMAN.

NOW,
BATTOSAI
IS NO
FOOL.
NO
DOUBT HE
ANTICIPATES
OUR
ASSAULT
ON AOI-YA
IN HIS
ABSENCE.

...COULD ONLY
CONCEIVE
OF THIS AS A
10-TO-3 DUEL.

JUST AS
YOU, WHO THINK
SO MUCH LIKE
OUR FOE...

THAT IS
SHISHIO-SAMA'S
"ABSOLUTE
VICTORY."

WE MUST NOT
FORGET THAT OUR
ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE
IS TO CONQUER
THIS NATION.

...OF
HIMURA
BATTOSAI
AND THE
REST OF
THEM...SIMUL-
TANEOUSLY!

AND
THAT
REQUIRES
RIDGING
OURSELVES...

WHEN
DID YOU
EARN THE
RIGHT TO
LECTURE
ME?

HŌJI.



I DON'T
CARE
IF YOUR
STRATEGY
IS
BRILLIANT
...

...I TOLD
BATTŌSAI
THAT THIS
WAS A
DUEL.



...WILL
NOT
ALLOW
ME TO
BEND
THAT.

THE
CODE
OF THE
SWORDSMAN
...

NOW QUIT
WASTING
MY TIME
AND GATHER
THE JUPPON-
GATANA!

THE
DUELS
WILL
NOT
CHANGE
!

...SO I
PROMISED
MYSELF TO
DO WHATEVER
I MUST TO
ENSURE SHISHIO-
SAMA'S ULTIMATE
VICTORY.

HISTORY
SHOWS THAT
THE NATION
WILL BELONG
TO THOSE WHO
ARE ABLE AND
WILLING TO
WIN...

SINCE I
FIRST GAVE
MY
ALLEGIANCE
TO THAT
FIST...

...

...I
HAVE KEPT
TO ONE
SECRET
PROMISE.

I
PROMISED I
WOULD PLAY
WHATEVER
ROLE I
MUST...

TP

TP

zoop

EVEN IF
SHISHIO-SAMA
HIMSELF
CAME TO
SEE ME
AS AN
ABOMINATION
!!

YES, EVEN
IF IT
BRANDED
ME A
COWARD
AND AN
UPSTART!

I CANNOT SERVE
A LOSING PLAN
THAT WILL NOT
PLAY THAT CARD!

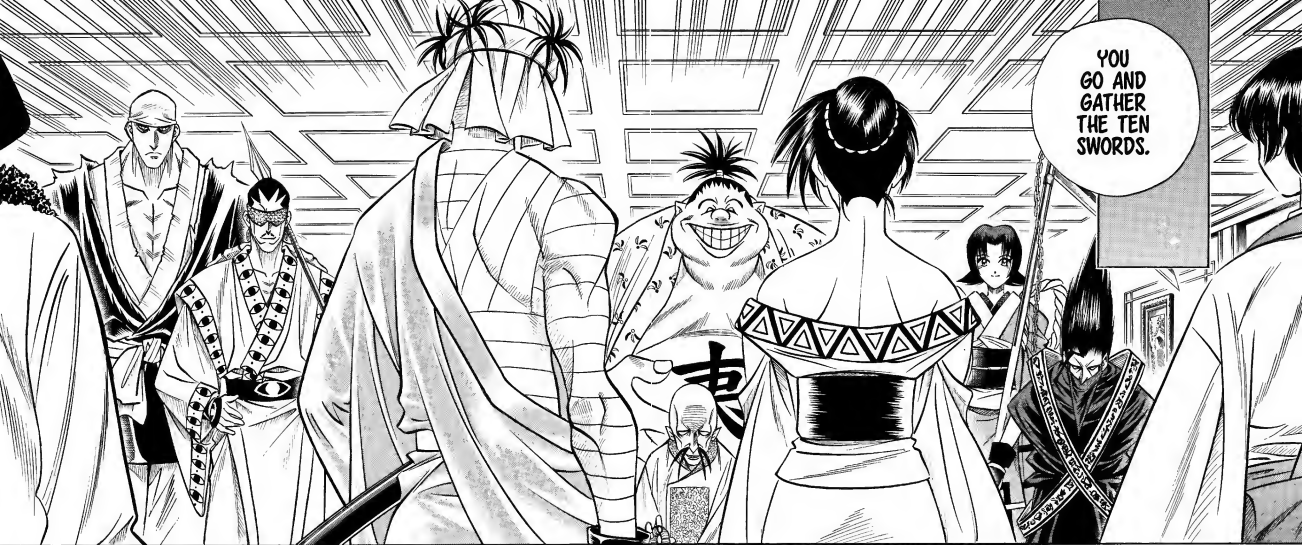
CRP
WITHOUT
RENGOKU,
THE JUPPON-
GATANA ARE
OUR STRONG
CARD.

...NOT ONLY
FROM THE
ENEMY, BUT
ALSO FROM
MY OWN DOG.

THIS IS
THE FIRST
TIME I'VE
MET RESIS-
TANCE...

YES?

ENOUGH.
SŌJIRO.



YOU
GO AND
GATHER
THE TEN
SWORDS.



THAT
WASN'T
THE
PLAN.

YOU
WERE ALL
SUPPOSED
TO BE ON
THE RENGOKU,
STEAMING
TO TOKYO.



MMM...
WHAT
ABOUT
THAT,
SHISHIO-
SAMA?

HEH



I HEAR
THAT THE
BURNING
OF KYOTO
WAS JUST A
DIVERSION.
WHICH
WOULD
MEAN
THAT WE
WERE
JUST A
SACRIFICE.



FUNNY.
I'VE BEEN
WANTING
TO ASK
SOMETHING
ABOUT THAT
MYSELF.



SHISHIO-
SAMA...
THIS
MEETING
...
...IS IT
FOR THE
NEXT
BATTLE?





THEN HŌJI
NEEDS
TO BE
PUNISHED.

...REALLY?
SO
THAT'S
HOW IT
WAS.

HA! I
WONDERED
WHY SHISHIO-
SAMA WOULD
ABANDON
US!



THAN



WHY
DON'T YOU
TELL THE
TRUTH,
HŌJI?



LIES DON'T
SNEAK
PAST MY
"SHINGAN"
MIND'S
EYE.

IF YOU
TELL THE
TRUTH, YOU
WON'T GET
HURT.

NNNN

...WHAT
YOU
MEAN.

I...
HAVE NO
IDEA...



THE JUPPON-GATANA WERE BETRAYED BY ME ALONE.

I SPEAK... ONLY THE TRUTH.

THE JUPPON-
GATANA
WERE
BETRAYED
BY ME
ALONE.

I SPEAK...
ONLY
THE
TRUTH.

**AND
I
WILL
PAY!**



SEVEN
NAILS FOR

SEVEN
NAILS FOR
SEVEN
BETRAYED...
IF YOU
WILL WASH
AWAY...

...ALL
SUSPICIONS
OF
SHISHIO-
SAMA!

Utt



**NOW!
YOUR ORDERS
FOR THE
NEXT BATTLE!**



**SAIZUCHI,
FUJI, HENYA,
KAMATARI,
AND IWANBŌ
WILL GO TO
AOI-YA—
AND BRING
ME BACK
THEIR
HEADS!!**



**SO—
USUI
AND
ANJI
REMAIN
HERE TO
DUEL
AGAINST
BATTŌSAI
!!**





FROM
NOW ON,
I WILL
LEAVE YOU
ALL THE
DIRTY
WORK.

HŌJI.
YOU WILL
REMAIN
HERE.

YOU
WON'T BE
ABLE TO
FIGHT WITH
THOSE
FINGERS.

SHISHIO-
SAMA...

TP

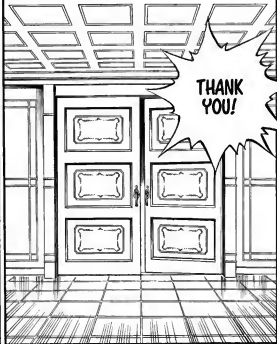
IN
RETURN, YOU
WILL ALWAYS
BE THE
FIRST TO
KNOW OUR
VICTORIES.

I'VE SEEN
THE FIRE
OF YOUR
DETERMINATION.

HEH

...MY
SIDE.

RIGHT
BY...



...IS
COMING.

BATTŌSAI
...



YOUR
TARGET IS
THE ONE WHO
DESTROYED
RENGOKU-
SAGARA
SANOSUKE!



THE
FIRST DUEL
GOES TO
ANJI!

PULL
OUT HIS
SKULL...
AND
BRING
IT TO
ME!

HIS
HEAD
ALONE
WON'T BE
ENOUGH.

THIS
MUST
BE IT.

SIX
GATEWAYS.

LET'S
GO!!

THEN...

WAAH

The Secret Life of Characters (33) —Sadojima Hōji—

Most of the idea came from a certain “X-Men” character liked by Watsuki (it’s where the name “Hōji” derives from). Not so much personality-wise, although he did give me a hint for the story. This character, from “X-Men,” doesn’t have any strong fighting powers, but he instinctively invents machines to help his allies. I thought it would be interesting to have a member of the Juppongatana who didn’t fight directly, but who played more of a supporting role. Thus was Hōji born.

In the beginning, Hōji was just someone who gets surprised a lot. “This could get awfully dull,” I thought, but then when I considered Hōji as Shishio’s “Number Two,” then the idea strummed the chords of my heart. (Just like Hijikata Toshizō and Shokatsuryō Kōmei!) Ideas started coming one after another, and soon Hōji became one of my favorite characters.

This may turn out to be a spoiler, but at the end of the Kyoto Arc, Hōji will be a pretty cool guy. I hope you’re looking forward to it! (Watch the character not have any fans but me....)

People always think the model in terms of design is “Giant Robo,” but that’s just not true. This Hōji is 100% original to me! He’s also one of the designs of which I’m most confident.

As touched upon in a previous volume, most readers seem to like “pretty” characters (male and female alike)—and probably with good reason!—but, for Watsuki, pretty’s not enough. I think a mature manga artist should be able to draw villains and monster-types, too, and so I tend to put more effort into those kinds of characters. (Besides, if all the characters in a series are good-looking, the baseline for “good-looking” would get lost, and then how would we know who was supposed to be *really* beautiful and who was not?)

The only thing I *don’t* like about the design for Hōji is the costume. I’d wanted to make it more like the European style authentic to those days, but when it came to finding the resources to do it, I couldn’t seem to find any....



Act 107—The Bright King



MEETING HALL





HE MAY
BE A FALLEN
PRIEST, BUT
HE DID LIVE
THE WAY OF
THE BUDDHA.



OF
COURSE
IT'S
POSSIBLE.

I DON'T
NEED YOU
TO TELL
ME THAT.

OF
ALL THE
TEN SWORDS,
HE HAS
THE MOST
COMPASSION.

HOWEVER....



...IS FAR
OUTWEIGHED
BY HIS
ANGER.

IN HIS
CASE,
WHATEVER
COMPASSION
HE MAY
FEEL...



...WILL
TOLERATE
NO ONE WHO
IMPEDES HIS
"SAVING" OF
THE WORLD.

ANJI...
THE
"BRIGHT
KING"...

悠久山安慈

YŪKYŪZAN ANJI

ろろうと剣心

RURŌUNI
KENSIN

Act 107 The Bright King



...THERE
IS A WAY
YOU CAN
MAKE
YOURSELF
USEFUL.



INSTEAD
OF
POINTLESSLY
WORRYING,
YUMI...

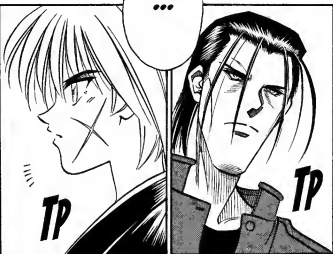
TP



TP

SOME-
ONE...

...IS
THERE.



FROM
HERE ON,
THE
BUILDING
BECOMES
A MAZE.

WELCOME.
I HAVE
BEEN
WAITING.

I WILL
BE YOUR
GUIDE. I AM
KOMAGATA
YUMI.



AND WHO'D
FALL FOR
A TRICK
LIKE THAT
EXCEPT
YOU?



A
COMMON
TRICK.
STAY
ALERT.

...USING
WOMEN
TO BRING
DOWN
OUR
GUARD.



...NO.
SHISHIO
ISN'T THAT
CONNIVING.

PLEASE.
COME
IN.





IT'S
NOT JUST
A MAZE.
IT'S A
LABYRINTH.

ONE
WRONG
TURN MAY
TRIGGER
A STORM
OF TRAPS.

EVEN
FOR AN
ASSASSIN'S
FORTRESS...

...THIS IS
AWFULLY
ELABORATE.



SO, A
DUEL,
YES.

KILLINGS,
NO.

AND YOU,
HIMURA-
SAN?

...IF
SOME-
ONE
TRIES
TO
FINISH
OFF
THE
LOSER.

FINE. BUT
THIS ONE
WON'T JUST
SIT AND
WATCH...

SUCH
A SOFT
MAN.

HEH

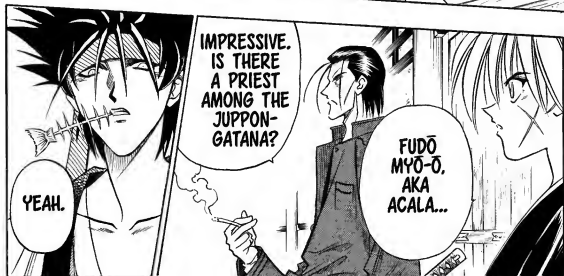
REALLY.

...IF YOU
PLEASE.

HERE'S
YOUR
FIRST
FOE...

間崎衆

WAKE
EE
EE
EE
EE
EE





ONE WHO
STRAYED
FROM THE
PATH.

A
FALLEN
PRIEST.



I'LL BE
FIRST
UP.

THERE
ARE THINGS
I WANT
TO ASK
HIM.



AND—

ANJI. THIRD-
STRONGEST OF THE
JUPPONGATANA,
AND THE ONE WHO
SAVED MISAO-DONO.



KOMAGATA-
DONO.
WHO IS
THIS...?



MYŌ-Ō
OR
"BRIGHT
KING"
ANJI.

HE
IS VERY
GOOD.

I'VE WANTED
TO SEE YOU
AGAIN, BUT
I DIDN'T
THINK IT
WOULD BE
LIKE THIS.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
ABOUT
HIS
PRESENCE
...

WHATEVER
HE IS, BE
CAREFUL,
SANO.

...NOR
DID I.

IT'S
BEEN
A
MONTH.

HO.

YOU
DISAPPOINT
ME.

THE
WORDS YOU SPOKE IN
SHIMOSUWA OF YOUR HATRED
FOR THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT
WERE ALL FALSE.

YOU
FRAUD
OF A
PRIEST!!

WELL,
YOU
DISAPPOINT
ME!

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOUR
"MISSION
OF
SALVATION"
?!

HOW
CAN A
PRIEST AID
SHISHIO
IN HIS
BLOOD-
SHED?!

THE FIRST
STEP IN THE
MISSION...IS
DESTRUCTION.

NOTHING
HAS
HAPPENED.

DO YOU BELIEVE
SAVING THE WORLD
MEANS RESCUING
PEOPLE FROM
SUFFERING?

WHAT?!

NOT THAT I
BLAME YOU. WHEN
I WAS BLINDED
BY BUDDHISM, I
THOUGHT THE SAME.

THIS WORLD
CONTAINS TOO
MANY BEASTS AND
SCAVENGERS, THOSE
WHO ARE NOT
WORTH SAVING...

BUT
NOW I
SEE THE
TRUTH.

FOOL.



**FOR
THIS DUTY,
I HAVE
JOINED THE
JUPPONGATANA.**

**I HAVE
BECOME THE
INCARNATION
OF FUDŌ
MYŌ-Ō!**

**...ROB
THE PURE-
SOULS OF
THEIR
RIGHTFUL
FUTURES.**

**...AND
THOSE
LOWLY
BEINGS
WITH
HUMAN
FACES AND
BEASTLY
SOULS...**

**BUT, IN
THE CHANGE,
SOULS HAVE
TURNED ROTTEN.
THERE ARE
FAR TOO MANY
BEINGS
UNWORTHY
OF LIFE.**

**FROM THE
CHAOS OF
BAKUMATSU
COMES THE
POWER OF
MEIJI.**

**...THE
UNWORTHY
MUST BE
CLEARED
AWAY.**

**TO SAVE
THOSE WHO
NEED TO
BE SAVED...**

GUESS
MAYBE I
DIDN'T STUDY
ENOUGH
BUDDHISM!

NOT
ONE
WORD,
FOOL!

CAN
YOU
UNDER-
STAND,
SAGARA
SANO-
SUKE?

I WILL
PUNISH THE
CORRUPT AND
LEAVE A
WORLD OF
PURE
SOULS!

THIS
IS THE
TRUE
MISSION!

I WILL
WASH
THIS
WORLD
CLEAN IN
BLOOD
AND
FIRE!

BUT I
KNOW
ONE
THING.

I
CAN'T...

GRIP

...YOUR
DAMN
MISSION
MUCH!!

...SAY
THAT
I
LIKE...

SANO!!



OORAH!!

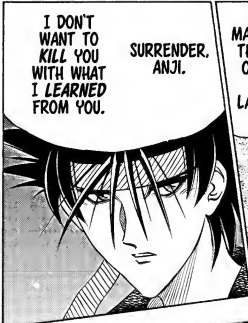


THIS IS
THE THIRD
TIME. IT
CAN'T BE
BY
CHANCE.



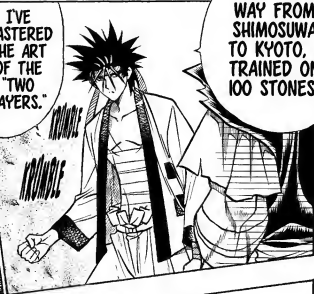
WE SAW
IT THAT
TIME WITH
RENGOKU...





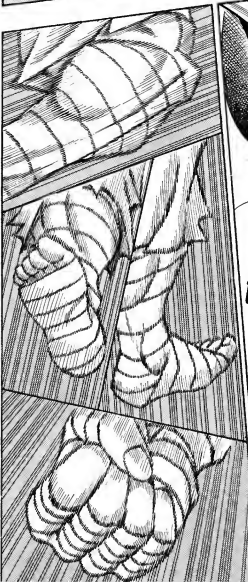
I DON'T
WANT TO
KILL YOU
WITH WHAT
I LEARNED
FROM YOU.

SURRENDER,
ANJI.



I'VE
MASTERED
THE ART
OF THE
"TWO
LAYERS."

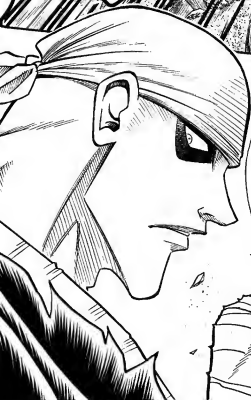
ON THE
WAY FROM
SHIMOSUWA
TO KYOTO, I
TRAINED ON
100 STONES.



YOU
BOAST,
LAD.

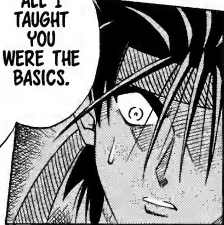


KILL
ME...?



**THIS IS
MASTERY.**

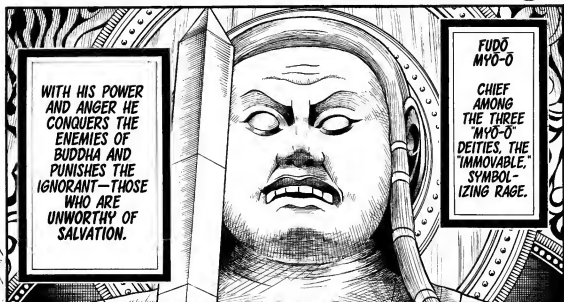
**ALL I
TAUGHT
YOU
WERE THE
BASICS.**



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 108—The Difference in Strength



...WHAT
IT MEANS
TO BE A
MASTER?

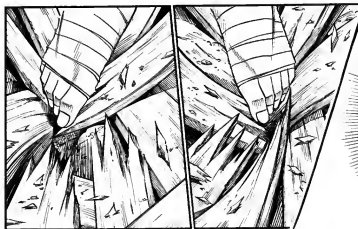
NOW
DO YOU
UNDERSTAND
...



Act 108

**The
Difference
in
Strength**





THE
"MASTERY OF
TWO LAYERS"
WITH BOTH
ARMS AND
LEGS...

SANO!

...AND HIS
LEFT ELBOW
INSTEAD
OF HIS
FIST?



**SHUT
UP!!**

DO YOU
WANT TO
SWITCH?

FFFFF

...AND
PROBABLY
EVEN HIS
HEAD IN
THE USE
OF THE
"TWO
LAYERS"!

NO MISTAKE—
HE CAN USE
BOTH ARMS...
HIS LEGS...

JUST
KNOW
...

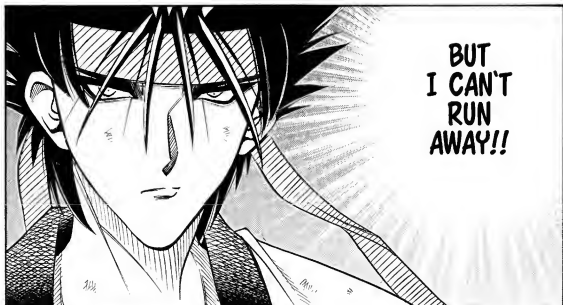
I DON'T
BLAME YOU
FOR BEING
BLIND TO MY
MISSION.

...AND
ONLY
ONE
MOVE
...

I'VE
GOT
ONLY MY
RIGHT
FIST...

...THAT
IT IS
THE
BLIND
WHO
MUST
DIE.

TRP



BUT
I CAN'T
RUN
AWAY!!



I
SAID,
SHUT
UP!

YOU'VE
OVER-
ESTIMATED
HIM.

ARR!

FFF

...I
THOUGHT
YOU WERE AN
INTELLIGENT
MAN.



SANO!!

**EVEN IN
KENJUTSU, TWO
SWORDS DON'T
ALWAYS BEAT
ONE!**

**DON'T
BE
INTIMI-
DATED!**



**I TELL
YOU, WITH
"FRIENDS"
LIKE
THESE...**



**YOU DON'T
HAVE TO BE
INTELLIGENT
TO DEFEAT
HIM!!**





...I DO
SEE A
WAY!

BUT...



HIMURA-
SAN.

DIS-
AGREEABLE
MAN.

STILL
THE SLICK
TALKER.
AREN'T
YOU.



THE DUEL
IS ONE-ON-
ONE. NO
AIDING
HANDS.



YES.
THAT'S
WHY
IT WAS
MOUTH
ONLY.



A
WAY TO
WIN?
POOR
FOOL.



...THEN
AGAIN,
MAYBE
SO!!

VSH!!

FOR
YOU, THERE
IS NO
SUCH
THING.

VAN

MAYBE
NOT...



BUT NOW
THOSE
MUSCLES ARE
WEIGHING
YOU DOWN,
NOT LETTING
YOUR BODY
FOLLOW YOUR
FIST!



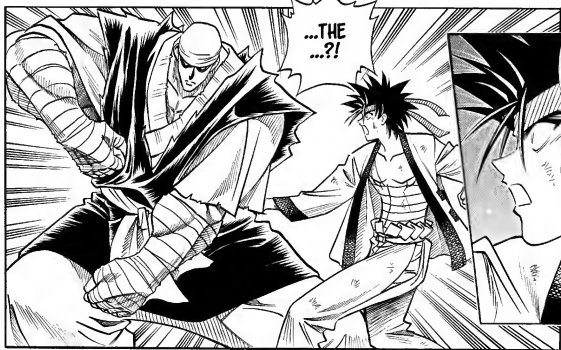
JUST AS I
THOUGHT! YOU
MASTERED
THE TWO
LAYERS AND
TURNED YOUR
BODY INTO A
MASS OF
MUSCLES...

DOESN'T
MATTER IF
IT'S JUST MY
RIGHT FIST—
THE FIRST ONE
TO LAND A
BLOW, WINS!!



THE TWO LAYERS
CAN TAKE DOWN
ANYONE WITH
ONE BLOW!





...MASTERY.

THIS
IS WHAT
YOU
CALL...

I
WILL
SAY
IT...

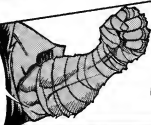
...ONE
MORE
TIME.

NGH!

SAND!



I WASN'T SURE
THERE WAS A WAY
TO BLOCK THOSE
BLOWS...



SIGH

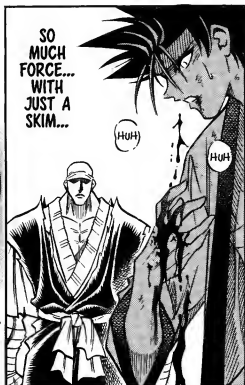
SO
CLOSE...





...THE
SAME
TECHNIQUE
I
LEARNED...

...BUT SO
DIFFERENT
FROM
MINE...

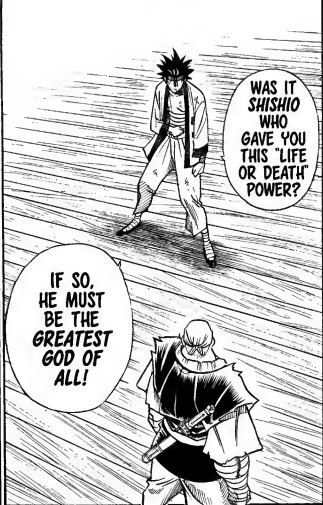




HE GAVE
ME NOTHING.
I'M AIDING HIM
BECAUSE WE
BOTH SEEK THE
DEATH OF THE
MEIJI
GOVERNMENT.



IF SO,
HE MUST
BE THE
GREATEST
GOD OF
ALL!



WAS IT
SHISHIO
WHO
GAVE YOU
THIS "LIFE
OR DEATH"
POWER?

...THEN I WILL
BECOME HIS
ENEMY, AND
DESTROY THAT
WORLD AS WELL.



BUT IF
THE NEW
WORLD
SHISHIO CREATES
DOES NOT SUIT
MY MISSION...

AND
YOU'LL JUST
KEEP
DESTROYING
FOREVER?



SOMETIMES
I FEEL LIKE
JUST KNOCKING
IT ALL DOWN.



I HATE
THE MEIJI
GOVERNMENT,
TOO, AND I
DON'T THINK
I'LL GET
OVER IT.

...AND OTHERS WHO
BELIEVE IN THOSE
PEOPLE AND FIGHT
FOR THEIR FUTURE!

CNG



BUT THERE
ARE PEOPLE
STRIVING TO
LIVE DECENTLY
IN THIS WORLD...

BUT AS
LONG AS THERE
ARE PEOPLE
WITH HOPE, I
WON'T LET YOU
PLAY GOD!

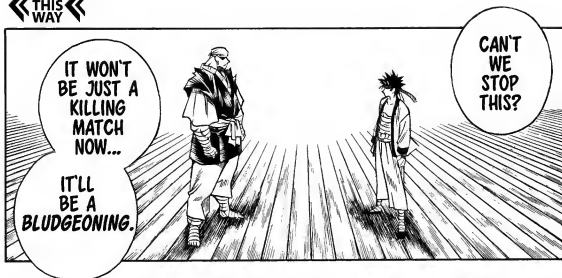


IT'S
YOUR OWN
BUSINESS IF
YOU WANT TO
GIVE UP ON
THE WORLD,
ANJI.

**I
CAN'T
LOSE
THIS
FIGHT
!!**

**I
WON'T
LOSE
THIS
FIGHT.**

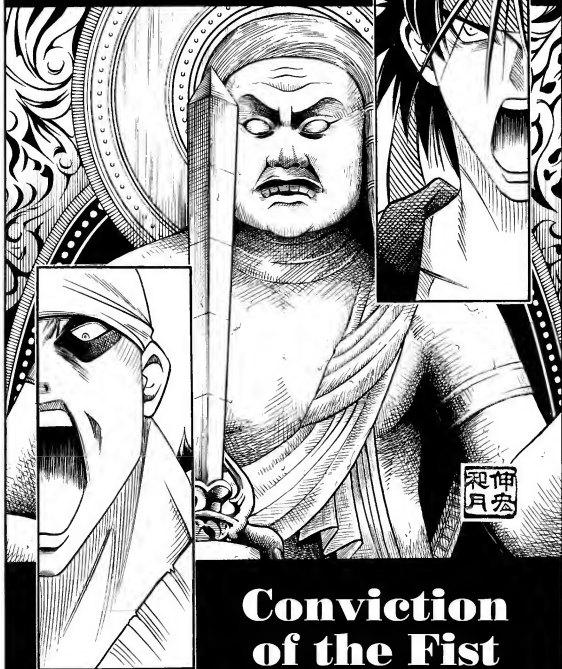




Rurouni Kenshin



Act 109



Conviction of the Fist



HOHHH!!



RAHH!





BUT
AGAINST
THAT WALL
OF MUSCLES,
I DON'T SEE
ANY HOPE.



THAT'S WHY
HE'S NOT
USING THAT
HAND AT
ALL.

SANO
KNOWS
THAT.

LOOK
AT ANJI.
CONCENTRATING
ON JUST
HIS RIGHT
HAND.

IT'S ALL
IN THE
MASTERY
OF THE
TWO
LAYERS.



**...AND
DIE.**

**YOU WILL
FEEL THE
RIGHTEOUS-
NESS OF
MY MISSION
WITH YOUR
BODY...**



**YOU WORRY
A LOT
ABOUT SANO,
DON'T YOU.**

**IF YOU
WANT TO
STOP
THEM, DO
IT NOW.**

**IT'S
ABOUT
TO
END.**

**I'M JUST WORRIED
ABOUT WHAT HIS
DEATH WILL DO
TO YOUR MORALE.**



**...DON'T
BE
STUPID.**



SANO'S
NOT GOING
TO DIE.

THEN
DON'T.

DO IT,
THEN
!!!





NOTHING
STOPS ANJI
WHEN HE
SWINGS THAT
FIST!!

AT
LAST!



WATCH
MY
MISSION
FROM THE
CHASMS
OF THE
AFTERLIFE
!





SORRY.
IT'S
TOO EARLY
TO PRAY
FOR ME.

...HAVE
NEUTRALIZED
IT?!

YOU
CAN'T...



WAAAAAAAAH!!!



**AND
NOW**

...

**...IT
IS
DONE
!!!**



...HALF
TRUE.

BUT IT WAS A
PLAIN,
STAB-IN-
THE-DARK
MIRACLE.

WELL.

YOU WON,
ALL RIGHT.

TRYING
TO COUNTER
ANJI'S RIGHT
WITH MY OWN
MASTERY OF
TWO LAYERS WAS
A GAMBLE.





IT'S WHY
I RISKED
MY LIFE TO
MASTER THE
TWO LAYERS
TO START
WITH.

WHAT I
HAD IN THIS
FIST WAS
CONVICTION.



BUT I
DIDN'T JUST
LUCK INTO
IT AT THE
END.



MIRACLE,
NO.

STAB
IN THE
DARK,
YES.



I
HOPE.

BUT HE
DID TAKE A
DIRECT HIT
FROM THE "TWO
LAYERS," SO HE
PROBABLY WON'T
BE WAKING UP
FOR A WHILE.



...ANJI...

...HE
CAN'T
BE...

DON'T
WORRY.
HE'S NOT
DEAD.



THE BLOW,
IT...LANDED
PERFECTLY...



N...
NO...





IT'S
OVER,
ANJI.

THE
MATCH
IS
OVER.



...YOU'RE A
FEW LEVELS
BEYOND
SANO.

TO BE
HONEST,
BASED
ON PURE
STRENGTH...

...BUT THE
DESIRE TO
KEEP
FIGHTING FOR
THOSE HE
PROTECTS.

BUT, IN
SANO'S FISTS,
THERE'S
NOT ONLY
POWER...





...BEYOND
YOUR
MISSION TO
"SAVE THE
WORLD."

THAT
DESIRE
BROUGHT
HIM
POWER...



THIS ONE
CANNOT
BELIEVE YOU
LIVE ONLY FOR
DESTRUCTION.

YOU
SAVED
MISAO-
DONO'S
LIFE.

ANJI.



...THAT
YOU HOLD
IT TO YOUR
CHEST,
EVEN IN
BATTLE?

AND WHO
DOES THIS
TABLET
BELONG
TO...



WHY
DID YOU
DECIDE TO
BECOME THE
"FUDO MYO-O"
ACALA BUDDHA?



THIS
REPRESENTS
THE PURE SOULS
OF THOSE WHO
WERE NOT
SAVED.



...ON THE
NIGHT THEY
DESTROYED
THE
TEMPLE...

IT ALL
STARTED
TEN YEARS
AGO...

“FREE TALK”

Long time no see. Watsuki here. There's a rumor on the streets that, after the conclusion of the Kyoto stories, "Rurōken" is going to end. Not true! So long as there's reader support, Watsuki will keep going. And now for the usual nonsense...

"Samurai Spirits 4: Amakusa Kōrin ('Amakusa's Descent')." At the time of this writing I've only played it four times, but it's VERY GOOD!!! They take into account beginners and bad players, lowering the difficulty of the computer and allowing for 120% enjoyment. The system's become even more complex—which startled me a little—but that's fun, too. I'll be hooked on "SamuSpiri" for a while (with "Rasetsu" Genjūrō, this time 'round). Speaking of fighting games, the polygon "Kenshin" is out. I haven't played this one yet, but it looks pretty good. There seem to be some hidden elements, so those of you who have the extra money to spend, give it a try.

Sunsets have really been getting to me lately...especially the sunsets of this season (winter), and specifically the ones that come at the end of the year. On this certain TV station in Tokyo, during the late-night programming after scheduled broadcasting, various shots of sunsets are shown as captured by weather-report cameras. I could look at them forever. Really, I'd like to watch them live, all night long, but unfortunately, I don't have the time. For now, my plan is to stay in a really high hotel room (elevation-high, not price-high) and just look at them—in Shinjuku or Ginza or maybe from a currently trendy seaside resort.

My reasons for liking sunsets isn't just because they're beautiful, but, because for me, they embody the end of a day, the end of a year, the way people struggle to keep going, even when they feel they've reached the end. (Know what I mean?) Take some time to watch a sunset—really watch it. You'll "get it" too, in your own way.

Okay, see you next volume!



Haibutsu Kishaku

In the fourth year of Keio—the first year of Meiji—the new government, in order to create a state religion and reduce the power of Buddhist priests, ordered the separation of Shintō and Buddhism. The population, though, interpreted this as an order to abolish Buddhism, and a storm of hostility was sparked that led to the destruction of many temples, relics, and texts. This is what's meant by "Haibutsu Kishaku"...a storm that now rages fiercely in one man's body.





Act 110

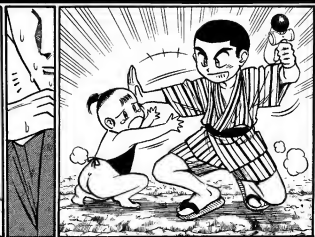
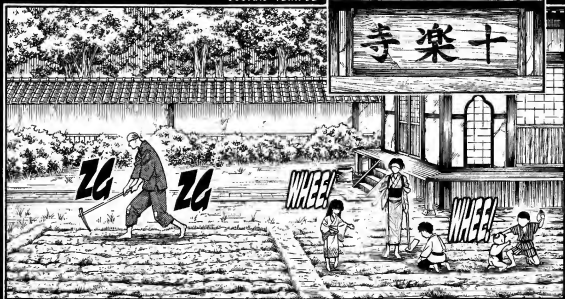
**A
World
Not
Worth
Saving**



THIS MOUNTAIN-
VALLEY
VILLAGE HAS
ALREADY BEEN
SECURED BY
MEIJI, THOUGH,
AND IS
WELCOMING
SPRING.

IN THE SECOND
YEAR OF MEIJI,
IN THE SNOWY
REGIONS OF EZO
(HOKKAIDO), THE
BATTLE BETWEEN
THE ARMIES OF THE
GOVERNMENT AND
THE SHOGUNATE
GOES ON.

JUGAKU TEMPLE





NOW
HURRY UP
AND PLANT
SEEDS!
PLANT!

WAAAH!

AND GORŌ,
STOP
CRYING
ABOUT
EVERY
LITTLE
THING!

PAP

HEY
TASUKE!!
QUIT
PICKING
ON
GORŌ!!



WON



YOUR
FACE IS
TOO KIND,
FOR
STARTERS!

YOU TOO,
PRIEST! WHEN
YOU SCOLD,
YOU HAVE
TO MAKE
YOURSELF
AN OGRE
AND SCOLD
WELL!

RAT

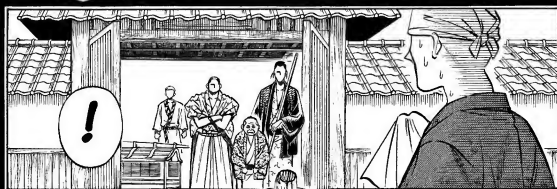
MM.



I'M
SORRY.

I'M NOT
SO GOOD
AT BEING
MEAN.







AS I
SAID.

...LEAVE
THE
VILLAGE?

THESE
CHILDREN
LOST THEIR
PARENTS IN THE
BOSHIN WAR,
AND HAVE
NOWHERE
TO...

BUT...
PLEASE...I
DON'T CARE
ABOUT
MYSELF,
BUT WHAT
WILL THE
CHILDREN
DO?

YOU KNOW
OF THE
HAIBUTSU
KISHAKU.

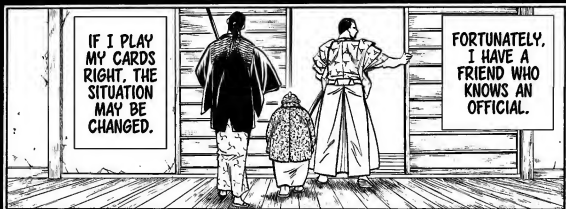
WE
DECIDED AT
THE MEETING
TO FOLLOW
THE GOVERN-
MENT'S POLICY...
AND RAZE THIS
TEMPLE.

MY
PREDECESSOR
AS CHIEF,
TSUBAKI'S
FATHER, SIDED
WITH THE
SHOGUN DURING
THE BOSHIN
WAR.

CON-
SEQUENTLY,
THE NEW
GOVERNMENT
FEELS LITTLE
FONDNESS
FOR US.

OR
RATHER...
THEY WILL
HAVE TO
LEAVE.

OF
COURSE
THEY CAN
LEAVE
WITH
YOU.



SUCH
WAS THE
WISH OF YOUR
FATHERS
AND
MOTHERS.

IT'S MY
WISH,
TOO.

DON'T
WORRY, ANY
OF YOU.
JUST ENJOY
BEING
ALIVE.

!

YOU HAVE
NOTHING
TO
APOLO-
GIZE
FOR.

I KNOW
THAT YOUR
FATHER DID
WHAT HE
THOUGHT BEST
TO BRING
PEACE
QUICKLY.

TP

WE
MUST MOVE
ON TO A
NEW LAND...
BUT WHERE?

BUT IF
WE STAY HERE,
WE WILL BE
A BURDEN ON
THE VILLAGE.

I SAY
HAKODATE
!

HAKODATE'S
IN THE
MIDDLE OF
THE WAR,
STUPID!

I SAY
TOKYO!
TOKYO IS
GREAT!

YAAAY!

NO!
KYOTO!

PLEASE
GRANT
THEM A
HAPPIER
FUTURE.

BUDDHA,
THESE
CHILDREN
HAVE
SUFFERED
TOO
MUCH.



MM?

CHIEF
...

DO
WE HAVE
TO BE SO
EASY?

NOBODY'S
GOING TO
COMPLAIN
ABOUT HOW
THEY'RE
TREATED.



IT'S JUST A
POOR PRIEST
WITH NO
PROPERTY IN
A WORN-DOWN
TEMPLE, WITH
FILTHY KIDS
WHO'VE NO
PARENTS.

PLEASE
GIVE
THEM...

...YOUR
PRO-
TECTION.

IF YOU WAIT
TOO LONG,
THE OTHER
VILLAGES
WILL GET
ALL THE
PRIVILEGES.



HEH

THE MEIJI
GOVERN-
MENT'S
FUNDS
HAVE A
LIMIT.

HM...





CRACKLE

CRACKLE

CRACKLE





!!!

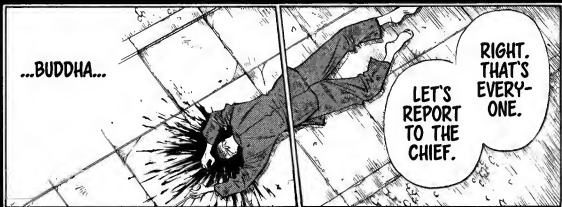
GO
GO
GO
H

GORŌ!

TSUBAKI!

TASUKE!

EVERYONE !!



...PLEASE
GRANT
THEM A
HAPPIER
FUTURE...

...THESE
CHILDREN
HAVE
SUFFERED
TOO
MUCH...



...YOUR
PROTECTION
...

PLEASE
GIVE
THEM...





...WHY
?!

WHY
HAVE
YOU
ABAN-
DONED
THESE
CHILDREN
...?!

...YOU TOO,
PRIEST.





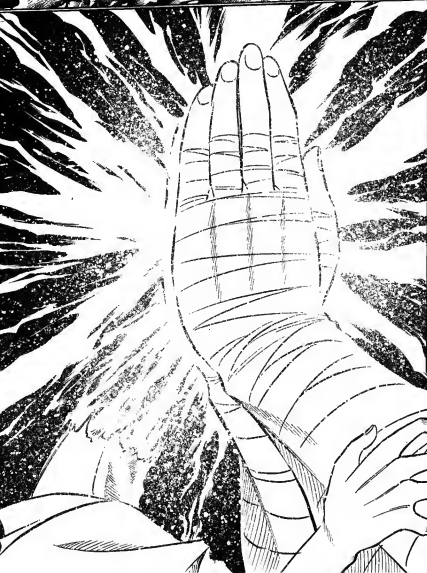
I BEG
YOU...
DON'T
KILL
ME!

PLEASE...
I WAS
WRONG...



THEN
...

FIVE
YEARS
LATER
...



MSH

NAMU...

FOR-
GIVE
...

...ME
...

MSH

...AMIDA
BUTSU.

"MYŌ-Ō
THE ANGRY"
CANNOT
LOSE...

...NOT
TILL THOSE
CHILDREN RIDE
THE WHEEL OF
REINCARNATION
AND LIVE
AGAIN!

PRAYERS
AND
WISHES
DON'T
SAVE
ANYTHING.

GRIP

...DO
YOU
UNDER-
STAND
...?

TO SAVE
THIS
WORLD
NOT
WORTH
SAVING...!!

ALL THAT
MATTERS
IS THE
MISSION...



HE
CAN BE
STOPPED
ONLY BY
FISTS.



HE CAN
NO LONGER
BE
REASONED
WITH.

I'LL
ANSWER
WITH
THOSE
FISTS!

SO
COME,
ANJI!



The Secret Life of Characters (34)

—Tsubaki and the Children—

First I developed Anji's past, and then the other characters came out of that.

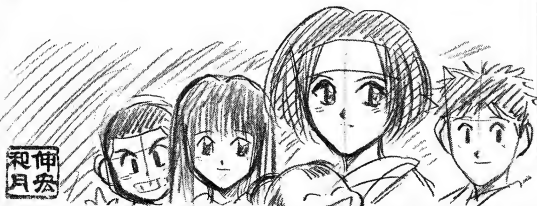
Originally, I was thinking about an entire orphanage (rather than just five orphans), but since that would have been a hassle to draw, this is how it came out. (And still it was a lot of work. Apologies to the assistants!)

I've gotten the comment, "Anji is like the character 'Colossus' in the 'Fatal Attraction' story arc of 'X-Men.'" I can see the similarity, but Anji was created over a year ago, and Watsuki read "X-Men: Fatal Attraction (Japanese Version)" after that, so it wasn't an influence. I do definitely think the flow is similar. Watsuki loves "X-Men," and in this case, "love" may mean more to feel "sympatico" with.

I've also gotten letters saying, "I think Tsubaki 'liked' the priest." Watsuki doesn't disagree. When writing tragic episodes such as this—when laying it all out in my head—I get really emotionally involved and look at it subjectively, and so at first, it flows very easily. But then when it comes to the point, as a writer, that I have to look at it *objectively*, there will always be some hurdles, requiring a tremendous amount of energy to get through. I do feel, having done this episode, that stories are better when they have a lighter tone, and happier content.

There are no models in terms of design. Some people have said Tsubaki looks like "Kusanagi Kyō" from "King of Fighters," but that's a wrong way to look at it. Let's both try and be more literal about this, huh? (Heh.)

Tsubaki's headband is something I put on her mostly to distinguish her from Megumi and Kaoru; there's no other meaning to it. (Oh, but I guess I *did* look into a fashion magazine for it, so maybe you could say the fashion magazine was the model.)



**Act 111—Conversation
of the Fists**



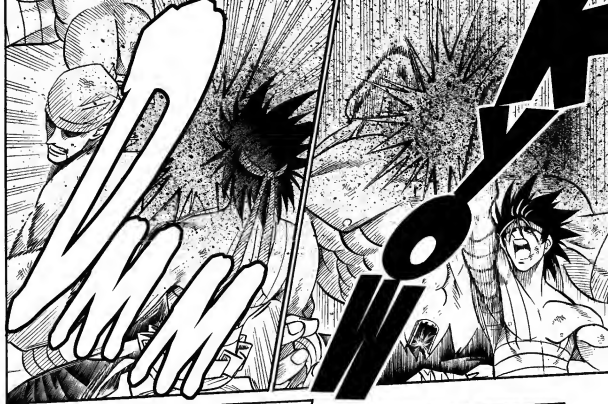


Act 111

**Conver-
sation
of
the
Fists**

神月
和宏







WHAT'S
HAPPENING?

THEY'RE
HITTING EACH
OTHER WITH
THE MASTERY
OF TWO LAYERS.
BUT NEITHER
IS FALLING.



BUT THEY'RE
BOTH ALSO
FIGHTING WITH
THEIR WILL
NOT TO LOSE.



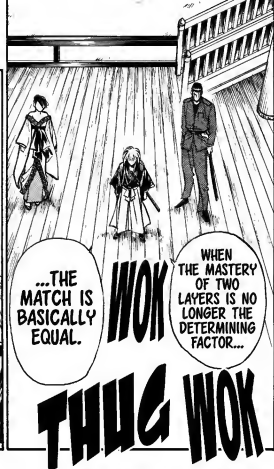
NO.
EITHER
MAY FALL
AT ANY
TIME.

THEIR
SPIRITS HAVE
SURPASSED
THEIR
BODIES.





DOESN'T
IT
BOTHER
YOU...



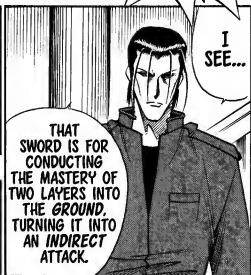




**LONG
RANGE!!**



**THIS
IS
IT!**



THAT
SWORD IS FOR
CONDUCTING
THE MASTERY OF
TWO LAYERS INTO
THE *GROUND*,
TURNING IT INTO
AN *INDIRECT*
ATTACK.

HYOH!!



HH

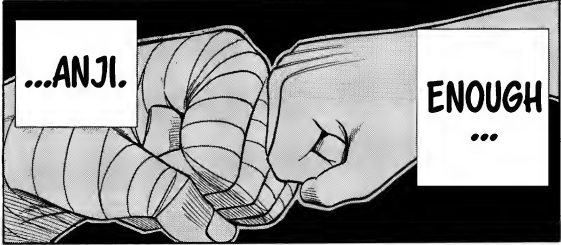
HH

**JUMP,
SANO!!**

HYOH







...ANJI.

ENOUGH

...



**THIS IS AS
GOOD A TIME
AS ANY TO
END YOUR
WOUND-FILLED
LIFE.**

**YOU'VE SUFFERED
MORE THAN
ANYONE SHOULD.**



**I WILL CONTINUE
TO FIGHT AS THE
"BRIGHT KING" UNTIL
MY MISSION IS
ACCOMPLISHED.**

**WOUNDS
DO NOT
MATTER.
ALREADY
I FEEL
NO PAIN.**

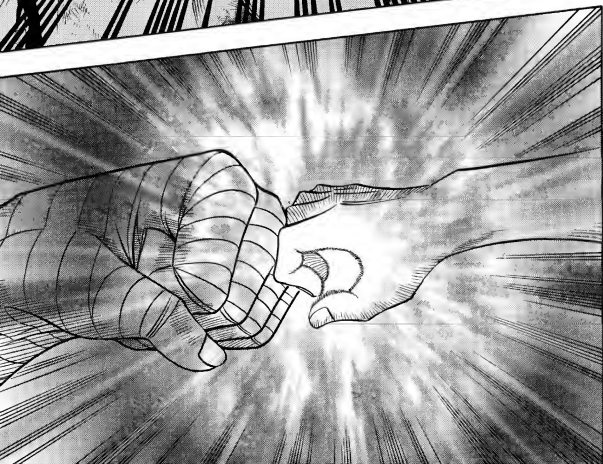


**...NEED
THIS
FROM
ME!!**

**THE
CHILDREN
WHO
SUFFERED
AND DIED
IN THE
FLAMES...**

...COLossal
FOOL!!

YOU...





...ANYTHING!!

YOU
DON'T
UNDER-
STAND
...



THE
"MASTERY
OF THREE
LAYERS"!





THEY ONLY
WANT THE PRIEST
WHO TOOK CARE
OF THEM TO
BE HAPPY!



LOOK!



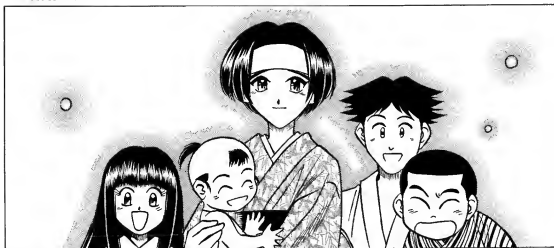
THOSE DEAD
CHILDREN
DON'T
WANT YOUR
MISSION!



YAAH!







**To Be Continued
in Vol. 14:
The Time Is Now**

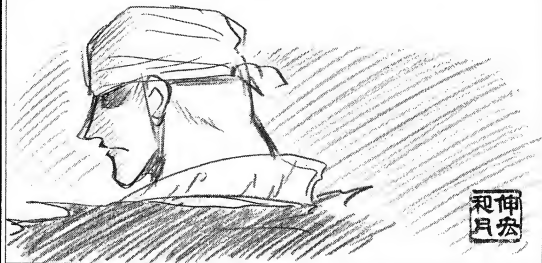
The Secret Life of Characters (28)
AMENDMENT
—Yūkyūzan Anji—

Looking back on Anji's story now, I would really have to say that, back then, I was immature as a writer.

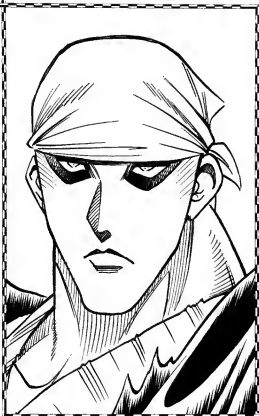
Reader response was mostly positive, but the story itself has been significantly cut back from how it was first imagined. I got carried away and kept writing, and then before I knew it, I already had five weeks' worth of story. If I'd kept on with it, it would have interrupted the flow of the fighting to come, so cutting was necessary (in the original version, there was a part where Anji's heart stopped momentarily, because of the "Mastery of Three Layers" thing).

I touched on this a bit in the last "Secret Life." Laying out a story is so, so fun...but then, when it comes to carrying it out, it's so, so hard. If you read into the story deeply enough, you'll agree that, even after all this, Anji's soul has yet to be saved. His rampage toward the dark side has been stopped, and there the story ends....

There's a quote Watsuki thought made so much sense when he first came across it: "Humans are beings who can work all their lives and, with luck, save maybe one other person." (I think it might have been in connection with a religious-themed essay about the "Ohm" incident.) I feel deeply that this applies not only to reality, but to the universe of manga, too. This doesn't mean I'm giving up, though—I may not have anything specific on Anji's later adventures yet, but slowly I *am* seeing the plot, and when the chance presents itself, I'll write it down. Although...you never know...it may turn out to be yet another sad story....



Rurouni Kenshin



GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

*A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in **Rurouni Kenshin**. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because **Kenshin** is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of **Kenshin’s** sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “**Hitokiri Battōsai**,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “**Battōsai Himura**.”*

Fudō Myō-ō

In Vajrayana Buddhism, the destroyer of delusion and protector of Buddhism. Also known in Sanskrit as “the Immovable One,” his immovability refers to his ability to remain “unmoved” by carnal temptations. His fearsome blue visage is typically surrounded by flames, representing the purification of the mind.

Hijikata Toshizō

Historically, Vice-Commander of the **Shinsengumi**

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—**Kawakami Gensai**, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist **patriots** who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s Juppongatana are literally that—the ten generals or “swords” he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

kanji

Japanese system of writing, based on Chinese characters

aku

Kanji character for “evil,” worn by Sanosuke as a remembrance of his beloved, betrayed Captain Sagara and the Sekihō Army

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Boshin War

Civil war of 1868-69 between the new government and the **Tokugawa Bakufu**. The anti-Bakufu, pro-Imperial side (the Imperial Army) won, easily defeating the Tokugawa supporters.

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

dojo

Martial-arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than **-san**; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the **Tokugawa Bakufu**; renamed **Tokyo** (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of **-san**, **-sama** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as **"-san"**).

Shinsengumi

Elite, notorious, government-sanctioned and exceptionally skilled swordsman-supporters of the military government (**Bakufu**) which had ruled Japan for nearly 250 years, the Shinsengumi ("newly selected corps") were established in 1863 to suppress the **loyalists** and to restore law and order to the blood-soaked streets of **Kyoto**.

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of **"Edo"** to **"Tokyo"** is a marker of the start of the Meiji Restoration

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of **Himura Kenshin**

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword-arts; kendō

Komei, Shokatsuryō

Famed Chinese strategist

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in **Rurouni Kenshin**—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the **Meiji Restoration** in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

Okashira

Literally, "the head"; i.e., leader, boss

Oniwabanshū

Elite group of onmitsu or "spies" of the **Edo** period, also known as ninja or shi-nobi.

patriots

Another term for **Ishin Shishi**...and, when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond